MEYER VON BREMEN

GALLERY

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SELECTED PHOTOGRAPHS

OF HIS

LATEST AND CHOICEST WORKS

WITH DESCRIPTIVE TEXT

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PREFACE.

IN no country are the works of MEYER VON BREMEN more thoroughly appreciated than they are in America; in proof of which is the fact that the greater number of his best originals are possessed by her connoisseurs. But, prolific though the painter is, and there is no living artist more so, his ability to create cannot keep pace with the growing desire of collectors everywhere to have examples of his surpassing skill as a colourist, and of his genius as a story-teller who has no living rival.

Recognising this great demand and the natural limit of the supply, the Compilers of this work believe that they gratify a popular desire in offering it to the public, since they thus place before them all that is most excellent in the originals, in truth of line, and light and shadow—*fac-similes* indeed of the paintings in the nicest sense, telling their beautiful stories no less truthfully than forcibly. Colour alone is wanting, and even this is more than half suggested, so subtle are the gradations of light and shade, and so faithful in form and texture to the things themselves are these beautiful shadows!

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

JOHANN GEORG MEYER,—better known as "MEYER from Bremen," so called after his native city,—was born on the 28th of October, 1813. Like most great artists, in his earliest youth he gave evidence of the love of the Beautiful, and of his ability to suggest his love and his imaginings to others. As a boy he preferred to give his leisure hours, when his companions were at play, to study drawing under the direction of his parents. This precocious application to Art gained him many friends and admirers; nor was he less faithful to other studies, his teachers pointing to him as a model for his schoolfellows. On festival or examination days he distinguished himself in all the branches of learning which he studied, gaining additional laurels by his remarkable talent as a young draughtsman, and by the merit of the poems of his composition.

But, for a time, his love was a divided one, Religion claiming her share of his thoughts and of his vivid imagination. She supplied his enthusiasm with food more promptly than slow-growing Art, and his day-dream took shape in the desire to become a Missionary, to visit distant lands and win the heathen to the joys and beauties of Christianity. Indeed, so absorbing did this thought become, that his Art studies were given up, and his whole soul surrendered to the passion—for it was all of this—for the adventure and the trials of a Missionary's life with the crown of martyrdom as its reward. There came a turning-point, however: In conversation one day with a

celebrated orthodox minister, then a visitor at his parents' home, he was told that "Art was an invention of the Devil," and that "religious pictures should be thrown into the sea where it is the deepest." Young as he was, and enthusiastic in religious feeling, this was more than Meyer could hear patiently of his beloved Art, and a reaction followed. He could not bear to doubt the Divine inspiration of the great Masters, to think that all their glorious work was false and worse than profitless, and he abandoned the idea of pursuing a calling, the professions of which so jarred upon his feelings, so marred the beauty of his early dreams. From that day he gave himself up exclusively to the study of the Fine Arts. Soon after this, misfortune visited his family; his parents came to want almost, but Meyer's talent was soon made profitable, and so successful was he in portrait drawing, that he not only helped his people manfully, but saved sufficient from his earnings to enable him to enter the celebrated Academy of Dusseldorf in 1834. His motto was, "Make the best use of your time; it never returns;" and this he wrote upon the walls of his studio, and followed its teaching so faithfully, that in but a few years, comparatively, he passed through all the classes of the Academy with honour. He was first under the teaching of the justly celebrated Professor Sohn; but finally graduated under the personal supervision of the Principal of the Academy, Herr von Schadow. Still animated by strong religious feeling, the first subjects of his pencil were in illustration of Bible History. His first Academy picture was completed in 1837, the result of indomitable perseverance and close and earnest study. The subject was "Elias in the Desert fed by the Angel." This first painting was an evidence of his peculiar power, since so nobly developed, in concentrating his light effect; and for which he has been often named "the later Rembrandt." Of his many other religious compositions he finished but two—"Lot and his Family at the Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah," and "Christ prophesying the Destruction of Jerusalem."

During the Academical vacation of 1840, Meyer, more for recreation than for a specific object, painted a small "*genre*" picture, "Mother and Child," which created such a sensation, that he decided thereafter to cultivate this branch of Art exclusively. From this date forward he sought the subjects of his pencil in the household, and among the familiar scenes of every-day life.

His subjects are invariably genial, and laden with generous feeling towards his fellow men. Sometimes they are instinct with religious feeling, if not strictly religious in character. Others, again, are replete with quiet humour—but a humour that never descends to caricature, and rarely affects the satirical; and all are bright and beautiful, laden with thought, masterly in composition and drawing, and brilliant to abandon in colour.

His amiable disposition, and purity of character, generally, are expressed in his works, and confirmed by the fact that his life is one long ovation from his myriads of friends and admirers. His daily intercourse is with congenial spirits, among whom he finds renewed inspiration, and, as we have said, his fancy is as inexhaustible as the sea—he is limited in production only by his humanity.

Meyer von Bremen married a lady in Dusseldorf in 1851. From this place he moved, that same year, to Berlin, where he has since resided. His own happy family circle has furnished him with many of his most successful subjects. His love for children is, as might readily be supposed, a passion with him almost; much of his leisure is given to them, and still more of his many hours of study. The ardour and love of truth with which he works at his selected subject, the spirited expression which he never fails to secure, his marvellous plastic execution, vivid effects of light, and that faultless *technique* which recalls the best cabinet pictures of the old Dutch school,—all these great qualifications, some of them peculiar to himself, have made him the worthy favourite which he is with Art lovers on both sides of the Atlantic.

LOVE'S YOUNG DREAM.

LOVE'S YOUNG DREAM.

THERE is probably no living artist whose works have a greater human interest than those of Meyer von Bremen; none whose subjects are less dependent on charm of colour or skilfulness of technique. It is no marvel then, that since they have these in addition to their greater interest, they should be amongst the most popular of the creations of modern art. Good drawing, skilful *chiaro oscuro,* pleasing colour, and the rare ability with which the thorough artist secures true suggestion of the quality of things, must always receive the admiration of the judicious, even when the subject is but common-place. But if the artist is to touch the popular heart—to be beloved as well as admired—he must appeal to the emotions rather than to the senses.

And herein precisely is the secret of this great artist's power. Each picture from his easel is a story—an episode in a life so simply and so touchingly pourtrayed, that, be it glad or sorrowful, we are stirred to sudden sympathy with the subject, and to added admiration for the genius of the maker.

Nor could we begin our volume with a better illustration of the artist's story-telling power than with this—his repetition of the "old old story," which is ever new. What poet but has sung of the tender passion; what novel can find readers in which the lover's fears and hopes are not depicted; what human life is complete without the memory of a scene like this?

'O happy love! where love like this is found!
O heartfelt raptures! bliss beyond compare!
I've paced much this weary, mortal round,
And sage experience bids me this declare—
'If Heaven a draught of heavenly pleasure spare,
One cordial in this melancholy vale,
'Tis when a youthful, loving, modest pair,
In other's arms breathe out the tender tale
Beneath the milk-white thorn that scents the evening gale!'"

It is the happy spring-time of their lives. The trees are in the fulness of their leaf, and the glad sunshine glorifies the familiar things about them. Is it chance, this meeting; or has he watched and followed after, unable to carry his love-burden longer unshared by her? The rose which he has gathered proclaims design, and the expression of her fair and lovely face suggests that the avowal is neither unexpected nor unwelcome. What sturdy manliness of character his form proclaims! How satisfactorily his expressive face suggests that he awaits the sweet response which is to decide his fate and hers! And who can doubt the sequel? "Yes" trembles on her parting lips; another moment and the fateful word is spoken!

And yet not only have we the story of "Love's Young Dream" told here with that peculiar grace which touches us in the most tender place; but we have our admiration appealed to on every side by charming composition, by a masterly arrangement of light and shadow, and a perfect harmony between the place and the actors in it. The form of the maiden is a picture in itself. How graceful the pose! With what subtle skill the arms and feet are modelled! How simple yet how beautiful the disposition of each line and fold of drapery! Above all, how fair and wonderfully suggestive is her face! And when we turn to the happy hero of the scene, how well his healthy figure and thoughtful earnestness satisfy our wish for her! Who doubts her safety in such keeping? How noble and how natural is his pose too; the simplicity of his dress heightening rather than lessening the effect. It is as if he said to her: "Even as I am, from day to day, do I present myself; a life of love and labour is the fulness of my promise."

LOVE'S MESSENGER.

LOVE'S MESSENGER.

THE "Messenger" has been justly pronounced to be one of the most pleasing of *genre* pictures ever painted, and in every particular a brilliant example of the best qualities of Meyer von Bremen's genius. The scene is doubtless the home of the village miller, a personage of no mean importance amongst his fellows, and one who, if he have a pretty daughter, had need be watchful of his charge. In illustration of this, we have this early visitor beneath the window, with the bouquet and the letter; nor did the god of Love himself ever put on a more appealing glance than she, as, with upraised, sun-lit face and beckoning finger, she awaits the coming of the lady-love. How skilfully the artist tells his story;—the broken wheel against the gable, and the distant gate, from which the watchful kitten has just issued to note the little stranger, are all that is needed to tell of the neighbouring mill; whilst the nicely ordered yard, the bright and sunny house-side, and the well-kept flowers upon the window-sill, tell of the thrift and taste of those within. But it is less to the suggested story than to the charming treatment of the figure of the messenger that the painting owes its peculiar interest. There is grace in the scanty dress, and both face and form gain beauty by judicious contrast.

"It is the miller's daughter,
And she is grown so dear, so dear,
That I would be the jewel
That trembles at her ear;
For, hid in ringlets day and night,
I'd touch her neck so warm and white.

And I would be the girdle
About her dainty, dainty waist,
And her heart would beat against me
In sorrow and in rest;
And I should know if it beat right,
I'd clasp it round so close and tight.

And I would be the necklace,
And all day long to fall and rise
Upon her balmy bosom
With her laughter or her sighs;
And I would lie so light, so light,
I scarce should be unclasped at night."

TENNYSON.

RETURNING FROM THE WOOD

RETURNING FROM THE WOOD.

IN "Returning from the Wood" we have another illustration of the artist's close observance of the habits, pursuits, and processes of thought peculiar to the class among whom he has found most material for his prolific pencil. The subject is not a new one. There are but few genre painters who have not painted in their time the little messenger returning from the field, to which she had carried her father's mid-day meal; but which of them has so drawn and placed his figure, so arranged his light, and so composed his picture generally, that it will bear the close analysis which this delightful little picture does? How perfectly balanced the figure is; how suggestive of the weary, up-hill effort of the overburdened child. How tired she looks, and yet how patient. Poor little struggler, how she stirs our heart to longing that some good traveller may overtake her and release her of her burden.

In colour this is one of the most brilliant of Meyer von Bremen's works, while the light is so admirably managed as to produce the most effective results.

The day is cloudless, each object in the bright line of light is suffused with it; whilst the forms in shadow gain force by contrast. How effectively this tells on the dark dress of the child, opposed to the luminous background;

and on the projected shadows of the foreground, making still more bright the pathway through the wood. How the flowers and grasses, sweet scented, sparkle in her lap. How skilfully articulated each stem in the bundle of brambles which she carries.

And yet, here again, we pass from analysis of the picture as a work of art, to dwell with still greater pleasure upon the expressive face of the child, and to permit our imagination to make a history for her, and prominent therein, the dear mother who will meet her at the door, and with a loving kiss wipe out the memory of the weary, lonely walk, "returning from the wood."

"Come back, come back together,
All ye fancies of the past,
Ye days of April weather,
Ye shadows that are cast
By the haunted hours before!
Come back, come back, my childhood;
Thou art summoned by a spell
From the green leaves of the wild wood,
From beside the charmèd well.

The fields were covered over
With colours as she went;
Daisy, buttercup, and clover
Below her footsteps bent:
Summer shed its shining store;
She was happy as she pressed them
Beneath her little feet;
She plucked them and caressed them;
They were so very sweet,
They had never seemed so sweet before

How the heart of childhood dances
Upon a sunny day!
It has its own romances,
And a wide, wide world have they!
A world where Phantasie is king,
Made all of eager dreaming;
When once grown up and tall—
Now is the time for scheming—
Then we shall do them all!
Do such pleasant fancies spring.

Too long in the meadow staying,
Where the cowslip bends,
With the buttercups delaying
As with early friends,
Did the little maiden stay.
Sorrowful the tale for us;
We, too, loiter mid life's flowers.
A little while so glorious,
So soon lost in darker hours.
All love lingering on their way."

SIMPLE DEVOTION.

SIMPLE DEVOTION.

AMONG the picturesque features of German landscape there are none more so than the stone crosses and shrines to be found along the roadsides almost everywhere, but especially numerous in those portions of the empire where the Catholic religion most prevails. The shrines, one of which is here depicted, are objects of great respect and veneration. Before them the peasants kneel and ask a blessing as they pass. The niche contains a clay or a wooden figure of the Madonna, or some other patron saint; and to this, as a symbol of the saintly one, the appeal is made. In illustration of this beautiful superstition we have before us here the figure of a young girl on her way to market, her basket on her arm, who stops at the shrine to make her offering of flowers, and to solicit in return a good and lucky day.

The statuesque grace of the little figure is pleasing in the extreme, and her simple costume eminently picturesque. Although the face is but in profile, so admirably managed is the play of reflected light upon it that we find no difficulty in catching the expression—one of mingled awe and admiration—sought to be conveyed. And there is also the suggestion of childish fear in the hesitating step and in the upraised impatient foot—a fear so natural in the lonely place, the scene, no doubt, of many miracles of sight and sound.

"Prayer is the soul's sincere desire.
Uttered or unexpressed—
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast.

Prayer is the burthen of a sigh,
The falling of a tear—
The upward glancing of an eye
When none but God is near.

Prayer is the simplest form of speech
That infant lips can try—
Prayer the sublimest strains that reach
The Majesty on high.

Prayer is the contrite sinner's voice
Returning from his ways,
While angels in their songs rejoice,
And cry, 'Behold he prays!'

Prayer is the Christian's vital breath—
The Christian's native air—
His watchword at the gates of death;—
He enters heaven with prayer.

The saints in prayer appear as one
In word, and deed, and mind,
While with the Father and the Son
Sweet fellowship they find.

Nor prayer is made by man alone—
The Holy Spirit pleads,
And Jesus, on the eternal throne,
For sinners intercedes.

O Thou by whom we come to God—
The Life, the Truth, the Way!
The path of prayer Thyself hast trod;
Lord, teach us how to pray!"

JAMES MONTGOMERY.

EXPECTANT.

EXPECTANT.

A FAIR young wife, late on a bright afternoon, sits alone, engaged in mending the scanty linen of the household. She hears, perhaps, the barking of a distant watch-dog, or the rumbling of a carriage—some sound which suggests to her the coming of one who is never out of her thoughts. Softly she parts the curtain which keeps out the full tide of sunlight, and, leaning forward, looks intently through the little quaint window-pane.

The attitude is to be noted. There is a perfect poise of the figure; she is intently listening, while eagerly looking, and the story is well told without an accessory. Her young married life is a morning unclouded. Could happiness be better depicted than in the pure sweet face, of which we get but a side view? The subject is a most interesting one, as no doubt a portrait from the life—a cleft in a cottage; one of those scenes of which, doubtless, there are many, but of which the great, busy, noisy world knows so little. The artist makes humble life beautiful. There is no exaggeration, no inappropriate introduction of things; it is a true picture in every particular, and yet no scene laid in a palace amid the most costly surroundings could be made to speak more eloquently of rest and happiness.

There is a little pot of flowers on the rude table, one also on the window sill, placed naturally and carelessly, and we seem almost to inhale the fragrance. Coming down between them is a broad passage of light. Here again is seen the artist's power. The golden light brings out the sentiment which he desires to express, for it is this that invests the homely room with such a glory.

Mark, too, how carefully the light is distributed. At the right hand it is reflected on the spotless table-cloth, where we find a suggestion—only by looking for it, however, and our interest in the subject increases as we gain the information—that probably supper is in waiting. Note, also, the transparency and depth of shadow.

May life be long and sweet in this quaint cottage, which tells of the glorious summer time, where we seem to hear the singing of birds and scent the fragrance of roses, and to which many of us look backward, not as a dream, but as a reality in our individual life; some of us for whom is reserved only an existence devoid of poetry and sentiment.

"Not as all other women are
Is she that to my soul is dear;
Her glorious fancies come from far,
Beneath the silver evening-star;
And yet her heart is ever near.

Great feelings hath she of her own,
Which lesser souls may never know;
God giveth them to her alone,
And sweet they are as any tone
Wherewith the wind may choose to blow.

Yet in herself she dwelleth not,
Although no home were half so fair;
No simplest duty is forgot;
Life hath no dim and lowly spot
That does not in her sunshine share.

She doeth little kindnesses,
Which most leave undone, or despise;
For nought that sets one heart at ease,
And giveth happiness or peace,
Is low-esteemèd in her eyes.

She hath no scorn of common things;
And, though she seem of other birth,
Round us her heart entwines and clings,
And patiently she folds her wings
To tread the humble paths of earth."

J. R. Lowell.

"YOU DON'T MEAN IT, DO YOU?"

"YOU DON'T MEAN IT, DO YOU?"

THERE are few artists who can make so much that is truly pictorial of the simple figure as Meyer von Bremen. With the genius and skill of the painter, he possesses the ability of the sculptor to so pose his figure that it needs no accessory to accent it, but is a thing of perfect beauty in itself. And of just this character is the picture before us. Rogers, the *genre* sculptor of America, could not better place his model for statuesque effect than the painter has this sweet-faced maiden who coquettes with us. And what a sweet face he gives us! How delicate the features, how expressive the eyes and mouth, how graceful the outline of the head, and how nicely fashioned the nervous ear, with its bit of pendent jewelry. What is she about, we wonder? Is this the morning after the village festival, and a late riser she? Has her faithful swain made an early call upon her; said something eloquently gallant, to which she replies with coquettish glance: "You don't mean it, do you?" Alas! poor youth, with what havoc to young hearts are such meaning glances laden!

This painting of the fair coquette is also another illustration of the artist's courage in the management of light and shadow. The face and figure where the light falls are brilliant. So skilfully managed are the deep shadows of the room, that we take for granted that there is something more than colour merely: that it is sunlight itself that plays with the outline of the figure, lights up the well-rounded forehead, with its crown of golden hair, floods the arm and shoulder, and falls upon the open book upon her lap.

"I fill this cup to one made up
Of loveliness alone,
A woman, of her gentle sex
The seeming paragon;
To whom the better elements
And kindly stars have given
A form so fair, that, like the air,
'Tis less of earth than heaven.

Her every tone is music's own,
Like those of morning birds,
And something more than melody
Dwells ever in her words;
The coinage of her heart are they,
And from her lips each flows
As one may see the burdened bee
Forth issue from the rose.

Affections are as thoughts to her,
The measures of her hours;
Her feelings have the fragrancy,
The freshness of young flowers;
And lovely passions, changing oft,
So fill her, she appears
The image of themselves by turns,—
The idol of past years!

Of her bright face one glance will trace
A picture on the brain,
And of her voice in echoing hearts
A sound must long remain;
But memory, such as mine of her,
So very much endears,
When death is nigh, my latest sigh
Will not be life's, but hers.

I fill this cup to one made up
Of loveliness alone,
A woman, of her gentle sex
The seeming paragon—
Her health! and would on earth there stood
Some more of such a frame,
That life might be all poetry,
And weariness a name."

EDWARD COOTE PINKNEY.

THE DECLARATION.

THE DECLARATION.

THE "Declaration of Love" is a fine example of the artist's success in the production of works which rival those of Rembrandt in their startling effects of light and shade. Indeed, so fond is Meyer of such effects, that it is charged against him, and with some justice too, that he makes his light do out-of-the-way things sometimes for the effects he thus secures. As, for example, it is difficult to realize, in the picture before us, where the flood of light comes from that illumines the faces of the young women, seeing that their backs are turned to the window, the only source apparent. We are to presume that it is to the rays reflected from the latter that this luminousness of face is due; but brilliant as the composition may have been, and white the sheet of paper, it is difficult to accept that they reflect so much light as is here attributed to them. Yet who will quarrel with a licence to which we owe so much? It is that liberty to which the work of Turner so often owes its force, and by which the most successful mountain pictures of Bierstadt are made poetically beautiful.

The story of this charming *genre* is not difficult to translate. The nearer figure is doubtless that of a young wife, who, while preparing the evening meal, is pleasantly interrupted by a companion and friend of her girlhood, who has called to unbosom herself of a most delicious secret. She has received a declaration of love, and her mind, already more than half made up, seeks counsel, if not approval, of her intent to take the writer at his word. Nor has she waited long to tell her errand. The young wife has had sufficient time only to turn from the table and her cabbage-cutting, when the eventful

letter is in her hands. How critically she peruses it; the experience of the matron, suggested by the half serious expression of her face, well pleased withal with what she reads! How unqualified the delight of the other; how she drinks in every tender word of it as her companion reads aloud!

With how little material a successful picture can be made when Genius holds the pencil! Here we have but the simply clad figures of two peasant girls, unaided by surroundings, to symbolize the great epoch of human life—that moment when young Love stands beneath the gateway leading from the peaceful pursuits of Youth to the new land and its struggles that lie beyond.

"Ah, how sweet it is to love!
Ah, how gay is young desire!
And what pleasing pains we prove
When we first approach love's fire!
Pains of love be sweeter far
Than all other pleasures are.

Sighs, which are from lovers blown,
Do but gently heave the heart;
E'en the tears they shed alone,
Cure, like trickling balm, their smart.
Lovers, when they lose their breath,
Bleed away in easy death.

Love and time with reverence use;
Treat them like a parting friend,
Nor the golden gifts refuse
Which in youth sincere they send;
For each year their price is more,
And they less simple than before.

Love, like spring-tides, full and high,
Swells in every youthful vein;
But each tide does less supply,
Till they quite shrink in again;
If a flow in age appear,
'Tis but rain, and runs not clear."

JOHN DRYDEN.

AT THE FOUNTAIN.

AT THE FOUNTAIN.

WHY the fountain, time out of mind, should be the favourite trysting place for lovers, it is difficult to determine, though many good and, to them, sufficient reasons have been suggested by novelists and poets. The picturesque beauty of the places generally is said to have something to do with it, for all lovers are true poets. And we might well be satisfied with this solution, as we look upon the charming scene before us. For what spot more happily fashioned, by nature or by art, than this, wherein to breathe the tender tale or listen to it,—this shady nook, so thoroughly suggestive of an interchange of sweet thoughts, interrupted only by the musical babble of falling waters. But is this a tryst, or a surprise? Did she expect to meet him here, or is his coming purely accidental? Surely there is something more than accident in the meeting which is near, and something more than mere acquaintance between the peasant youth, who, shading the sunlight from his eyes, approaches through the wood, and her whose trembling hand ill guides the pitcher to the stream.

Of the illustrations of this book there is none possessed of more perfect beauty than this painting of the meeting "At the Fountain." The figure is drawn and posed with the utmost grace—a model of female beauty. The

face and head are classic in their outlines, and the quiet joy of sweet expectancy illumines every feature of the lovely woman. How delicately fashioned are the naked arms and feet! With what unstudied grace she stands, unconscious, yet beautiful as a Naiad!

"I love thee—I love thee!
'Tis all that I can say;
It is my vision in the night,
My dreaming in the day;
The very echo of my heart,
The blessing when I pray:
I love thee—I love thee!
Is all that I can say.

I love thee—I love thee!
Is ever on my tongue;
In all my proudest poesy
That chorus still is sung;
It is the verdict of my eyes,
Amidst the gay and young:
I love thee—I love thee!
A thousand maids among.

I love thee—I love thee!
Thy bright and hazel glance,
The mellow lute upon those lips,
Whose tender tones entrance;
But most, dear heart of hearts, thy proofs
That still these words enhance,
I love thee—I love thee!
Whatever be thy chance."

HOOD.

THE SICK DARLING.

THE SICK DARLING.

"The air is full of farewells for the dying
And mournings for the dead;
The heart of Rachel for her children crying
Will not be comforted.

Let us be patient; these severe afflictions
Not from the ground arise,
But oftentimes celestial benedictions
Assume this dark disguise."

SO wrote America's great poet, from whose happy home Death had ruthlessly borne the sweet flowers of childhood, leaving him desolate. Here a Christian mother watches beside the cradle of her sick darling, under the conviction that the worst possible is about to befall her. She is weary with long nights and days of anxiety. At length the hour approaches that is to decide the fate of the little one, and, while he is said to be past hope, her woman's instincts seem to say, It shall not be; yet plainly the countenance indicates that if it must be she will seek to bear her load of grief by looking to her God.

The countenance expresses all a mother's tenderness with a Christian's faith. It is an interesting face, plaintive, sad, and indicating the burden of a great agony. How unconsciously the muscles of her hands contract by reason of her anguish. And yet how placid is the countenance! She has opened the Book from which so many have been comforted in sorrow, and reads abstractedly. There is an air of deep silence in the picture. Looking at it intently, you fancy you see the breathing of the little sufferer, and wonder if the worst must come to him.

Here is masterly drawing. Evidently the artist must have had personal knowledge of some such scene, it is rendered with so much power.

The accessories are simple, yet painted with characteristic care. A candle, partially burned, stands on the plain dresser, just as it was left at daybreak. A broad patch of light falls on the table where the steam comes off a bowl of gruel, placed on a little furnace.

Let us hope that the little one shall live, and that the rosy light of cheerfulness may yet rest on the pale face now watching through the long days and nights so anxiously.

"A host of angels flying,
Through cloudless skies impelled,
Upon the earth beheld
A pearl of beauty lying,
Worthy to glitter bright
In heaven's vast hall of light.

They saw, with glances tender,
An infant newly born,
O'er whom life's earliest morn
Just cast its opening splendour;
Virtue it could not know,
Nor vice, nor joy, nor woe.

The blest angelic legion
Greeted its birth above,
And came, with looks of love,
From heaven's enchanting region;
Bending their wingèd way
To where the infant lay.

They spread their pinions o'er it,—
That little pearl which shone
With lustre all its own,—
And then on high they bore it,
Where glory has its birth;—
But left the shell on earth."

W. Wordsworth.

TWILIGHT.

TWILIGHT.

IT is not often that our artist selects the shady side of life for subjects for his pencil; but when he does it is to teach some wholesome moral, or to stir our sympathy to some good purpose. In the painting before us, appropriately entitled "Twilight," we have a touching story told—the story of the wife left desolate to struggle with the world for bread. How admirably the sentiment of the picture is enhanced by the gloomy sky, and gloomier sea beneath! What sad thoughts are hers, as, weary with coarse labour, for which she is ill-fashioned, she rests upon the cold, grey, weather-beaten wall, to watch the daylight dying in the west, as hope dies in her heart. Does she think of the past too; and is there pleasure or pain for her in the retrospection? Is he dead, or unfaithful only, if unfaithfulness be less than death in the bitterness it leaves behind it?

"Whom first we love, you know, we seldom wed.
Time rules us all, and life, indeed, is not
The thing we planned it out ere hope was dead.
And then, we women cannot choose our lot.

Much must be borne which it is hard to bear;
Much given away which it were sweet to keep.
God help us all! who need, indeed, His care.
And yet, I know the Shepherd loves His sheep.

My little boy begins to babble now
Upon my knee his earliest infant prayer:
He has his father's eager eyes, I know;
And, they say, too, his mother's sunny hair.

But when he sleeps and smiles upon my knee,
And I can feel his light breath come and go,
I think of one (Heaven help and pity me!)
Who loved me, and whom I loved long ago;

Who might have been . . . ah! what I dare not think!
We are all changed. God judges for us best.
God help us do our duty, and not shrink,
And trust in Heaven humbly for the rest.

But blame us women not, if some appear
Too cold at times, and some too gay and light;
Some griefs gnaw deep, some woes are hard to bear.
Who knows the past? and who can judge us right?

Are we judged by what we might have been,
And not by what we are—too apt to fall!
My little child—he sleeps and smiles between
These thoughts and me; in heaven we shall know all!"

ROBERT BULWER LYTTON.

THE SHEPHERDESS.

THE SHEPHERDESS.

SURELY this picture of a mountain maiden is no mere studio study, though this may be suggested by the well-cut features and hands of faultless shape, and fairly fashioned limbs. No, there is a pose which is unmistakeable, a modesty and daring expressed in the open countenance which could be counterfeited by no city model. Possibly the artist, in winding around a mountain path, came in view of her, and, half concealing himself behind a rock, began to sketch. She sees him, but does not know what he is about. Certainly there is an inquiring look, an expression of simple wonder, and it is very sweet.

How little, after all, is needed the aid of rich and costly dress for the enhancement of true beauty. Here behold a child of nature, a dweller amid the fastnesses of the eternal rocks, clad in simple peasant garb, yet royal as a queen. Her form suggests the strength as well as the grace of the mountain. Of apparently light mould, she is, nevertheless, an athlete, as indicated by the full arm below the shoulder. A study of the quiet face reveals a will and purpose—a hardihood born amid the storms. Only the artist who sees such a subject, and who possesses a memory upon which he can call for every detail of outline, light and shadow, thus giving us the real story, could so nobly treat a subject of this character.

It is a courageous essay, for the interest of the picture is wholly dependent on the treatment of the figure. The pose is perfect, original, and charming. Note how gracefully the finely-moulded foot touches the rock below; how

the expressive face is improved by the simple head-dress; how the breeze, playing with her flaxen hair, gives added lines of grace; how skilfully the rocks are suggested, while the flock, a portion of which is seen to the right of the figure, helps to verify the story.

This is indeed a pleasing picture, and one that calls us away to the pure moral atmosphere of mountain life; for the purity expressed by it is its most inviting characteristic. These pastoral scenes, when properly rendered, are never tiresome. They suggest to us that neither beauty nor contentment woo the haunts of wealth exclusively, but that in the solitary places of the earth are to be found those things which men covet most.

"Come live with me, and be my love,
And we will all the pleasures prove
That valleys, groves, and hills and fields,
Woods or steepy mountains yields.

There will we sit upon the rocks,
Seeing the shepherds feed their flocks
By shallow rivers, to whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

There will I make thee beds of roses
With a thousand fragrant posies;
A cup of flowers, and a kirtle,
Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle;

A gown made of the finest wool,
Which from our pretty lambs we pull;
Fair-lined slippers for the cold,
With buckles of the purest gold;

A belt of straw, and ivy buds,
With coral clasps and amber studs:
And if these pleasures may thee move,
Come live with me, and be my love.

The shepherd swains shall dance and sing
For thy delight each May morning;
If these delights thy mind may move,
Then live with me, and be my love."

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE.

THE FISHERMAN'S WIFE.

THE FISHERMAN'S WIFE.

THERE is no duty of life the performance of which awakens such variety and intensity of emotion as that of the mariner. Adventurous, dangerous, and self-sacrificing always, it has afforded more themes for the poet, and more subjects for the painter, than has any other calling. In the painting before us, we have but another version of the "old, old story,"—the story of the pain that waits on love. The fisherman is out at sea; his young wife, weary, waiting for the sound of his footstep near their cottage door, and the cheery voice whose rude music makes her heart throb as no other music can, has gone to the beach and out to a quiet spot upon the rocks to catch the first glimpse of the expected sail. The luminous horizon, the play of light upon the rocks, and the drapery of the figure, tell of the approach of evening and suggest the wherefore of the somewhat anxious expression of her face. And how wonderfully expressive this face is; how beautiful in its pensiveness. For while the profile is not that of a beauty, there is that in its graceful lines, and in the far-searching look of the eye, and in the sensitively tremulous mouth, which stirs our sympathy much more readily than mere beauty could, however dramatically posed. In this, as in most of his works, the great merit is in the apparent truthfulness of each detail. For here the face and form, if idealized at all, do not in the least degree violate the probabilities. Many a fisherman's bride there has been, and is, as fair as she who here awaits the coming of her lover. The pose of the figure, while surpassingly graceful—statuesque, indeed, in its grace—is simply natural, and one familiar to those who have watched the unstudied attitudes of girls and women, where they have not ceased to be womanly at the bidding of their milliners.

In only one particular, it seems to us, has the artist taken undue licence, and in doing so somewhat disturbed the sentiment which his picture, as a whole, is well calculated to inspire. Surely there is no good reason that his heroine should be out at elbows. The answer would be that he wanted that "bit of dark" where the arm curves; that by using it he might accent the light upon the broken sleeve, and yet keep its form distinct from the apron upon which it rests. Doubtless such was the reason; and yet, surely it was within the compass of his genius to effect his purpose in some better fashion, since in this way he suggests the unthrifty wife, not such a one as would look most lovely in her husband's eyes.

"We sat by the fisher's cottage,
And looked at the stormy tide;
The evening mist came rising,
And floating far and wide.

One by one in the light-house
The lamps shone out on high;
And far on the dim horizon
A ship went sailing by.

We spoke of storm and shipwreck—
Of sailors and how they live;
Of journeys 'twixt sky and water,
And the sorrows and joys they give.

We spoke of distant countries,
In regions strange and fair,
And of the wondrous beings
And curious customs there;

Of perfumed lamps on the Ganges,
Which are launched in the twilight hour,
And the dark and silent Brahmins,
Who worship the lotus flower;

Of the wretched dwarfs of Lapland—
Broad-headed, wide-mouthed and small—
Who crouch round their oil fires, cooking,
And chatter and scream and bawl.

And the maidens earnestly listened,
Till at last we spoke no more;
The ship like a shadow had vanished,
And darkness fell deep on the shore."

HENRY HEINE.

THE SURPRISE.

THE SURPRISE.

WHILST Meyer von Bremen has but few living rivals as a colourist, and none more skilful in composition, it is less to his great technical ability than to his remarkable story-telling power that he owes his popularity—the popularity which is akin to that of the poet, whose songs make homes for themselves in the hearts of the people in sympathy with whom they have been written. And, like the songs of Beranger or Burns, the painted poem of Meyer von Bremen never fails to awaken a responsive echo; for he speaks a language which is universal, even in his pictures of humble life, appealing to human nature generally rather than to the individual class whose loves and fears, and hopes and joys, he typifies.

In this reproduction of his painting of the "Surprise," we have a touching expression of the beauty and simplicity of the peasant life which he has studied to such advantage. The return of the peasant, whilst the sun is yet well above the horizon, suggests that his labour has been on some distant farm, and that, this complete, he is returning to his home after an absence of several days. All unconscious that he is watched, he trudges along, weary in body yet light in soul, happy in the anticipation of the welcome and the rest that wait for him, and singing as he comes. The young wife, who has been to the village for her marketing, and who has sat down to rest herself for a moment, hears his voice and recognizes him. In childlike playfulness, she hides, that she may startle him with her presence when he comes nearer. The simple naturalness of her position is to the last degree pleasing. Her left hand, resting against the tree, supports her as she leans forward; her

right keeps back the obtruding folds of her dress, which, unrestrained, might attract, too soon, the attention of him she hides from, thus telling the story of her whereabouts. Her face is charmingly expressive of repressed delight, and of the eagerness of one who contemplates the sudden motion which is to startle and surprise. We can fancy that she retains her breath, so eager does she look; and we wait, ourselves, expectant, to note the forward spring, the glad cry of welcome, and the fond embrace of these two loving hearts, upon whose pathway home the sunlight falls so happily, suggesting the summer of their lives.

"Not theirs the vows of such as plight
Their troth in sunny weather,
While leaves are green, and skies are bright,
To walk on flowers together;

But they have loved as those who tread
The thorny path of sorrow,
With clouds above, and cause to dread
Yet deeper gloom to-morrow.

That thorny path, those stormy skies,
Have drawn their spirits nearer;
And rendered them, by sorrow's ties,
Each to the other dearer.

Love born in hours of joy and mirth,
With mirth and joy may perish;
That to which darker hours gave birth
Still more and more they cherish;

It looks beyond the cloud of time,
And through Death's shadowy portal;
Made by adversity sublime,
By faith and hope immortal."

BERNARD BARTON.

JEALOUSY.

JEALOUSY.

THE admirable picture of which this is a reproduction was painted in 1871. It ranks high, and deservedly, amongst the most effective of the artist's works. Eminently interesting in subject, simple and graceful in composition, and brilliant in colour, it at once enlists our sympathy and wins our admiration. In the photograph, the brilliancy of colour is forcibly suggested by the luminous distance, by the light effects on the nearer foliage on the pathway, and where the glow of the sunset is caught by the projecting elms and the gnarled branches of the great forest-trees. The story of the picture is not difficult to read. It is one of misplaced affection. The blonde beauty, with face so exquisite, so expressive, who stands in the shadow of the tree, has doubtless gone out into the wood with the twofold purpose of gathering sweet herbs and meeting with her lover returning from the hay-field. Her task being done, she listens for his footfall, her purpose to surprise him by stepping out of the shadow of the tree into the bright sunlight in his presence. He comes; she hears his step, his voice; but alas! the music that it makes is not for her. His ready tongue shapes words for another's ear. A village belle has been overtaken on the way, and to her the artless youth is but too generous of his pleasantries and admiration. How graceful the unconscious beauty lies posed in shadow!

How admirably balanced the figure! How expressive the raised finger at the lip! How pitiful, how touching, the sad, sweet face of her whose pride alone restrains the sudden burst of anguish!

"And wilt thou leave me thus?
Say nay! say nay! for shame!
To save thee from the blame
Of all my grief and grame.
And wilt thou leave me thus?
Say nay! say nay!

And wilt thou leave me thus,
That hath loved thee so long,
In wealth and woe among?
And is thy heart so strong
As for to leave me thus?
Say nay! say nay!

And wilt thou leave me thus,
That hath given thee my heart,
Never for to depart,
Neither for pain nor smart?
And wilt thou leave me thus?
Say nay! say nay!

And wilt thou leave me thus,
And have no more pity
Of one that loveth thee?
Alas! thy cruelty!
And wilt thou leave me thus?
Say nay! say nay!"

Sir Thomas Wyat.

BO-PEEP.

BO-PEEP.

THE subject here reproduced is pronounced one of the happiest of the artist's impersonations, and one of the most brilliant of his works in colour. The young mother, returning from market, rests for a moment on the stone bench by the road side near her house. Her little boy, long watching for her coming, has started out to meet her, and, his welcoming caress done, would now enlist her in his play. Nothing loth, to humour him, she affects the tyrant mother, striking at his merry face, as, like a ray of sunlight, it sparkles here and there among the bushes. The faces of the happy pair are eminently expressive; hers, of that fond mother-love that passeth understanding; his, of the health and happiness of childhood and of the challenge to the battle. That face, with its frame of sparkling leaves, is itself an artistic triumph, yet only a degree more attractive than the sweet one of the mother in the shadow of the overhanging branches. In the position of her figure repose is admirably suggested, and the simplicity of the dress, so graceful in its lines, lends beauty to the face and head, which kerchief-crowned is classic in its perfect outline.

"When the corn-fields and meadows
Are pearled with the dew,
With the first sunny shadow
Walks little Boy Blue.

Oh the Nymphs and the Graces
Still gleam on his eyes,
And the kind fairy faces
Look down from the skies;

And a secret revealing
Of life within life,
When feeling meets feeling
In musical strife;

A winding and weaving
In flowers and in trees,
A floating and heaving
In sunlight and breeze;

A striving and soaring,
A gladness and grace,
Make him kneel half-adoring
The God in the place.

Then amid the live shadows
Of lambs at their play,
Where the kine scent the meadows
With breath like the May,

He stands in the splendour
That waits on the morn,
And a music more tender
Distils from his horn;

And he weeps, he rejoices,
He prays; nor in vain,
For soft loving voices
Will answer again,

And the Nymphs and the Graces
Still gleam through the dew,
And kind fairy faces
Watch little Boy Blue."

ANONYMOUS

AT THE CRADLE.

AT THE CRADLE.

THE painting to which we are indebted for this picture is one of the latest of the artist's works, having been finished but a few months, as the date mark shows. It gives no evidence of declining power; on the contrary, it must be pronounced one of his most successful paintings. Nor can it be charged against this quiet interior, that the artist has resorted to any peculiar disposition of his light to give undue emphasis to any portion of the work. It is a picture of perfect repose; the sparkling bit of sunlight only that touches the cradle edge attracting the glance to the central point of interest. It is the story of the loving mother's watchfulness by the bedside of her darling. Weary with play, the little babe has gone to rest, cuddling her dolly in her arms. The father is doubtless on his way home from his daily labour; for the light that comes through the low window of the cottage tells that the sun is low. Of him, and her, her pretty babe, the mother sits and dreams. What a rosy future does she paint for both! Blessing it all, with her ever present patience and affection. This mother's face is wonderfully expressive. All that is sweet and good in woman's nature is here suggested, while the figure itself is posed with the utmost grace and naturalness. Yet where the eye rests with the greatest satisfaction is upon the sweet face of the sleeping little one, so wonderfully baby-like it is, so suggestive of childhood's peaceful rest. How admirably the face is drawn and modelled; so round and plump it is, that we feel as if the canvas must yield like flesh to the fingers' pressure.

In this picture of sweet content, where the surroundings, if not of the rudest, are at best but of the humblest kind, there is this moral plainly written: that our happiness owes less to circumstance or position in this life than to the spirit with which we accept and follow the fate allotted to us. What

mother, in her nursery, with her baby laid on silken couch, knows happiness more unalloyed than that suggested to us here, as in the possession of this young peasant wife? How few there are who seek to know her simple joy!

"Art thou a thing of mortal birth,
Whose happy home is on our earth?
Does human blood with life imbue
Those wandering veins of heavenly blue
That stray along that forehead fair,
Lost 'mid a gleam of golden hair?
Oh! can that light and airy breath
Steal from a being doomed to death;
Those features to the grave be sent
In sleep thus mutely eloquent;
Or, art thou, what thy form would seem,
A phantom of a blessèd dream?
A human shape I feel thou art—
I feel it at my beating heart,
Those tremors both of soul and sense
Awoke by infant innocence!
Though dear the forms by Fancy wove,
We love them with a transient love;
Thoughts from the living world intrude
Even on her deepest solitude.
But, lovely child! thy magic stole
At once into my inmost soul
With feelings as thy beauty fair,
And left no other vision there.

O vision fair! that I could be
Again as young, as pure, as thee!
Vain wish! the rainbow's radiant form
May view, but cannot brave, the storm;
Years can bedim the gorgeous dyes
That paint the bird of Paradise;
And years, so Fate hath ordered, roll
Clouds o'er the summer of the soul.
Yet, sometimes, sudden sights of grace,
Such as the gladness of thy face,
O sinless babe, by God are given
To charm the wanderer back to heaven."

John Wilson.

THE FIRST LESSON.

THE FIRST LESSON.

THE "First Lesson" is also one of our artist's latest pictures, and in colour, as in composition, one of the most effective. In it we have another phase of the happy side of German peasant life. The morning meal over, the young mother has sat down to her sewing, and pauses in her work to help her baby daughter over the first difficulties of the scholar. The little one has pushed cup and saucer to one side for the mysteries of the spelling-book. The full flood of the morning light falls upon the child's figure, on the book, and on the linen in the mother's lap. The cloth and utensils of the table catch the bright light and lend brilliancy and cheerfulness to the interior. There is an air of thrift about the place, in keeping with the story sought to be conveyed. The tidy arrangement of the cups and saucers on the shelf, and the pitcher and books laid carefully in the alcove, with an almanac pendent from the mirror, and the other accessories of the room, tell of that carefulness in small things characteristic of the German people. And what a quaint charm to us, who know only of the rigid lines and frailty of modern furniture, there is in those old-fashioned chairs, and in that rude but thoroughly reliable

breakfast table! And what homely comfort there is in the simple dress of the young housewife herself. There is evidence of subtle skill, too, in the pose of either figure—of that of the mother, who pauses in her work, her needle in her fingers, as in that of the child, who looks up inquiringly as she holds the puzzling page before her.

"Three years she grew in sun and shower;
Then Nature said: 'A lovelier flower
On earth was never sown;
This child I to myself will take;
She shall be mine, and I will make
A lady of my own.

'Myself will to my darling be
Both law and impulse; and with me
The girl, in rock and plain,
In earth and heaven, in glade and bower,
Shall feel an overseeing power,
To kindle or restrain.

'She shall be sportive as the fawn
That wild with glee across the lawn
Or up the mountain springs;
And hers shall be the breathing balm,
And hers the silence and the calm
Of mute insensate things.

'The floating clouds their state shall lend
To her; for her the willow bend:
Nor shall she fail to see,
Even in the motions of the storm,
Grace that shall mould the maiden's form
By silent sympathy.

'The stars of midnight shall be dear
To her; and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place,
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face.'"

WORDSWORTH.

BLIND MAN'S BUFF.

BLIND MAN'S BUFF.

WE can well believe the stories told of Meyer von Bremen's surpassing love for children, and of the delight he takes in amusing them, when we look upon this happy picture entitled "Blind Man's Buff." No person but he who has entered into the game with the children themselves, and, with true childish abandon, could so well convey its spirit. Had Wilkie not known, and moved, in the life of the humblest, and had he not participated in the rollicking merriment of the kitchen, his picture of this same title had not been painted. It is amongst his most famous pictures, and it is the truth of it which gives it immortality. As much may be said for the work of Meyer, so ably reproduced before us. If the artist is not seen in the picture, we know that he was there. This grouping of the figures is no mere studio business, but the result of sketches made at the happiest moment of the play. Nor does it lie with the composer to arrange the forms of a picture so harmoniously, aided only by his imagination or by his memory.

Here we have the result, doubtless, of the sketch made when the subject was first suggested, and of the evident painstaking labour when each individual figure was made an especial study of. What a happy sunny scene it is! Who can look upon it and not wish for childhood days again? What a cunning-looking rogue the hero is—a perfect picture of himself; as, impatient at the delay imposed upon him and at the shutting out of daylight, he raises the handkerchief to get a peep at his persecutors—a better peep we should say, for it is evident that he knew something of his whereabouts, since he has chosen the moment when the pump is between him and his playfellows to take the forbidden glance. And how graceful in its playfulness is the kneeling

girl, as with the upraised branch she prepares to strike the water with the rod, to the discomfiture of her play-fellow. So, also, with the figure of the oldest of the group, who, with pointed finger, restrains the others till the fitting moment comes, and with her other hand controls the little ones, who would spoil the fun with their impulsiveness.

What innocent merriment is in the face of each! How simply truthful it all is! How admirably in keeping the little actors with the scene itself.

And when leaving the happy group, one eye embracing the accessories of the picture, we recognize the evidence of the artist's breadth of power and of the completeness of his work. What landscape painter can show us in his sketch-book a more perfect, pleasing scene than this? The comfortable quaint old farm-house, with its wealth of surrounding foliage, and, suggested rather than seen, the figure of the young mother with her baby and the grandmother at her knitting. How the distance between the group of the foreground and the house is suggested, and to the left how dreamily beautiful the distant field and foliage, suggested by the heavenward-pointing spire; beyond this the river, on its course seaward through the valley! Faithful portraiture, all of it; even to the painting of the pitchers, the baby cart, and the queer old trough and pump and the shrine above them, with its half-hidden figure of the Madonna.

"I love to look on a scene like this,
Of wild and careless play,
And persuade myself that I am not old,
And my locks are not yet grey;
For it stirs the blood in the old man's heart,
And makes his pulses fly,
To catch the thrill of a happy voice,
And the light of a pleasant eye.

I have walked the world for fourscore years,
And they say that I am old
That my heart is ripe for the reaper Death,
And my years are well-nigh told.
It is very true! it is very true—
I am old, and I 'bide my time;'
But my heart will leap at a scene like this,
And I half renew my prime.

Play on! play on! I am with you there,
In the midst of your merry ring;
I can feel the thrill of the daring jump,
And the rush of the breathless swing.
I hide with you in the fragrant hay,
And I whoop the smothered call,
And my feet slip up on the seedy floor,
And I care not for the fall.

I am willing to die when my time shall come,
And I shall be glad to go
For the world, at best, is a weary place,
And my pulse is getting low;
But the grave is dark, and the heart will fail
In treading its gloomy way;
And it wiles my heart from its dreariness
To see the young so gay."

N. P. Willis.

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